



Memorandum

TO: Historic Landmarks Commission

FROM: Courtney Damkroger

SUBJECT: See Below

DATE: December 17, 2002

APPROVED:

DATE:

**SUBJECT: HP01-06-010, DEMOLITION A CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE AND
CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW 2,400 SQUARE FOOT OFFICE BUILDING
AT N. FOURTH AND E. JULIAN STREETS IN THE HENSLEY
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

BACKGROUND

The developer, Thang Vu, is proposing a new 2,400 square foot office building at the northeast corner of N. Fourth and E. Julian Streets. As a part of this proposal the developer is proposing to demolish an existing residential structure that is listed as a contributing structure in the Hensley Historic District. Surrounding land uses are offices to the north, residential to the east, vacant land to the south, and retail to the west.

The site has a General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Medium Density Residential (8-16 dwelling units/ acre). The existing office use is in conformance with the General Plan because it is developed and is less than two acres in size. Specifically, the General Plan states that, "Since parcels of two acres and less in size may be too small to be separately identified on a map of the scale of the official Land Use/Transportation Diagram, any developed parcel of two acres or less is deemed to be in conformance with the General Plan regardless of how it is designated."

The Zoning for the subject site is CO Commercial Office, which allows for a limited range of low-intensity commercial uses. The Zoning Ordinance states that, "This district is intended to be a low intensity office zone that allows for a scale of offices in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods."

The design review subcommittee of the Historic Landmarks Commission met with Andy Do, the project architect, at its March 27, 2002 meeting to review and discuss conceptual plans. The Commission comments from that meeting are as follows:

**The Design Review Committee was generally supportive of the proposal.
Commissioner Sciara commented that the existing building was of questionable merit,**



because the windows and roof had been substantially altered from the original. She also commented that the proposed building was not overly large and provided a good transition from the Hensley District to surrounding neighborhoods.

The commissioners noted that larger homes in the area are generally Victorian in character and that the proposed building should reflect that style.

The direction the Design Review Subcommittee provided to the applicant was to focus attention on building trim and windows. The subcommittee requested samples and brochures of materials proposed to be used in construction.

The project was to be heard at the July 10, 2002 HLC meeting. The applicant was not present, and the project was deferred with the request that the architect return to the design review subcommittee and provide information regarding height and details prior to returning to the HLC. The design review subcommittee met with Andy Do at its September 18, 2002 meeting to review and discuss the items requested by the HLC. The Commission comments from that meeting are as follows:

? Section of building clarifying the number of floors:

The architect clarified that the building is two floors, with a 1½ story second floor at the entry. The entry dormer has been reduced in size, and dormers have been removed from the side elevation.

The committee recommended that the quatrefoil windows on the side elevation be changed to simple round windows.

? Elevation including elevations and massing of adjacent buildings:

The architect provided a Julian Street elevation. While the adjacent craftsman bungalow is only one story, the street is lined with several large two-story residences, which match the height of the proposed building.

? Samples of proposed materials and colors:

A color rendering indicating historically compatible gray and white colors was presented. Actual color specifications and material (composite roofing, wood siding, railing, door and window samples) will be called out on the final plan set and will be presented at the HLC meeting.

? Greater detail of embellishments, particularly balustrade and porch:

The architect clarified that the first floor porch will be accessible, while the second story balustrade is for ornamentation and will be installed on an inaccessible roof, not a balcony.

HISTORIC RESOURCE DESCRIPTION

The existing structure, Vu's Bail Bonds at 153 E. Julian Street, is listed as a contributing structure in the Hensley Historic District on the San Jose Historic Resources Inventory. The historical report (DPR and Tally attached) prepared for the Historic Preservation Permit and Site Development Permit concluded that the existing house would be considered a non-contributing structure on its own merits, but is listed as a contributing structure as a part of the Hensley Historic district. The Historic Report describes the subject building as follows:

“The structure as it stands today is a single-story bungalow with Craftsman design elements, significantly altered from its original state. It is of balloon frame construction, covered by vinyl siding. The roof is moderately pitched and front-gabled, with a secondary lower front gable over the main entryway. The eaves are open with enclosed rafters. Some of the windows retain wood casements, although most have been replaced. All of the windows are aluminum-framed and include a mixture of fixed, sliding, and double-hung sash configurations. The secondary main entry gable juts out from the front of the structure, and is supported by square wooden posts. Craftsman style decorative triangular knee braces have been retained beneath the entryway gable.”

Pictures of the building proposed for demolition are below.



Figure 1. 153 E. Julian Street, front view.



Figure 2. 153 E. Julian Street, three-quarters view.

ANALYSIS

The developer is proposing to demolish the existing building and construct a new 2,400 square foot office building. Two key issues are whether demolition is appropriate in the Hensley Historic District, and whether the proposed building is consistent with the historic district.

The building has been substantially altered from its original state and the historic report questions its integrity. According to the historic report, when evaluated independent of the district using the San Jose Historic Resource Tally, the building scores 29.89. The 20 point bonus for its contributing status to the Hensley Historic District brings it to a 49.89.

The Historic Report submitted as a part of the application states that, “It is recommended that the proposed second story addition be of comparable architectural style and form to be compatible with the existing building as well as the surrounding district. This would allow for the proposed project while protecting the integrity of the district.” The applicant has indicated that the building has too little historical value to be incorporated into the proposed project.

The site is located at the southern edge of the Hensley Historic District (please see attached map in Historic Report). The district extends from N. Second to N. Seventh Streets, with Julian Street as the largest southern boundary. The corner of the N. Fourth and E. Julian Streets, where the subject site is located, is a part of the District that has some intrusions. An office building sits to the north of the site, a restaurant to the west, and vacant land to the south, outside of the district. The adjacent property to the east is a similarly styled one-story bungalow.

The primary project issue is conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The Standards suggest that new construction be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing of the historic district. The proposed project calls for a residentially styled office building, based on a rare grouping of three large period revival residences within the Hensley Historic District (31, 33, and 37 East Julian Street).

As proposed, the visual character of the proposed project is generally compatible with the historic fabric of the district. The thirty-foot high, two and one-half story building respects the 21’ front setback of the adjacent historic residential structure. The architect has reduced the proposed second story dormers in order to reduce the overall massing of the project and

simplified window details to differentiate the design existing historic buildings in the district. The proposed materials include wood windows and siding, while the proposed body color is light gray with white and dark gray trim.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends the Historic Landmarks Commission recommend approval of the proposed Historic Preservation Permit to the Director of Planning.

Courtney Damkroger
Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments: DPR and Tally

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